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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the judge who uses argumentation and logic as the sole criteria for determining the winner of an academic debate sees debate as an intellectual contest with speech being only an incidental element. A paradigm for judging is presented and discussed in terms of the following core concepts: analysis, investigation, evidence, reasoning, refutation, and rebuttal. Analysis is the arriving at an understanding of the proposition and the discovering of the inherent issues. Investigation is the process of accumulating information about a proposition. Evidence is an informative statement believed by the listener and employed by an arguer to secure belief in another statement. Reasoning is the process by which we infer a conclusion from premises. Refutation is the attempted destruction of the opponent's argument. Rebuttal is the attempted rebuilding of an argument once it has been attacked. It is concluded that this paradigm is an excellent one for judging an academic debate. (TS)

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DEBATE AS A PARADIGM FOR DEMONSTRATING SKILLS IN ARGUMENTATION AND LOGIC

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It must be said in the beginning that this writer is not an advocate of the paradigm that is the subject of this paper. It is too limited in nature to be a paradigm employed for judging academic debates. Having long ago been branded a traditionalist, I make no apology for drawing on the philosophy of George Pierce Baker for my personal paradigm for judging an intercollegiate debate. It was in 1895 that Baker argued

> In the first place, Argumentation consists in something more than mere reasoning. If we confine it to reasoning only, we have examined only the warp of the material, overlooking the woof. We convince by cogent reasoning, but we persuade--and we have seen that in good argumentation, Conviction and Persuasion are almost inextricably mingled -- by study of our fellow men and what stirs emotions in them.[1]

Though I make this disclaimer, I do feel that skills in argumentation and logic have been relegated to an inferior position in judging contemporary academin debate. Therefore, I am not entirely sophistic in being an advocate for the subject paradigm for purposes of this paper.

In order to facilitate discussion in this paper, it is necessary to consider the two terms "argumentation" and "logic." Freeley defines "argumentation" as ". . . the art and science of using primarily logical appeals to secure decisions."[2] Castell defines "logic" as ". . . the study of the principles and problems of argument."[3] Capp and Capp relates logic to reasoning

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thusly: "Logic, the process of distinguishing between good and bad reasoning, tests the thinking process to determine if the inferences drawn from evidence conform to the established rules of reasoning."[4] These authors further define reasoning as ". . . the process by which we infer a conclusion from premises."[5] These definitions come from a logician, Castell, and argumentation scholars, Freeley and the Capps. Since I prefer short, concise definitions, and since I believe that the aforementioned scholars have given us acceptable working definitions, these definitions will be used for purposes of this paper.

This writer proposes to describe the subject paradigm and then to explicate debate judging in accordance with this paradigm.

The judge who uses argumentation and logic as his sole criteria for determining the winner of an academic debate sees debate as an intellectual contest with speech being only an incidental element. After carefully weighing the elements of argumentation in a debate, this judge then becomes a participant in that argumentation by making his value judgment as he renders his decision. Perhaps this judge could be construed as using argumentation as a critical apparatus by which the debate is adjudicated. Mills contends that argumentation is an analytical-critical instrument and further asserts that

> Since argumentation serves analytical and critical functions which are not used to effect persuasion, and since, as we shall soon see, argumentation has derived its principles from dialetic and logic as well as rhetoric, it seems proper to conclude that the process called argumentation is more than a logical part of persuasion. In fact, if argumentation were defined as persuasion, its so-called logic would have to be judged in terms of its persuasive effect instead of some external standards of reasonableness. But when argumentation is taken to be a kind of science of proof, it can be used to test the reasoning in a persuasive communication, because, as we saw earlier, it embodies more or less objective standards of critical analysis.[6]

Mills' mention of argumentation as being used to test reasoning should not conflict with the previous definitions established in this paper. If argumentation uses logical appeals and logic can be used to test reasoning, it would seem that there would be logical considerations in using argumentation to test reasoning.

The use of this paradigm for judging will be discussed in terms of various core concepts. These concepts are as follows: Analysis, Investigation, Evidence, Reasoning, Refutation, and Rebuttal. It is granted that there are other elements of a debate that are considered by a judge. These elements include prima facie case, inherency, presumption, and burden of proof. However, I submit that when these elements are evaluated, the evaluation takes place in terms of the aforementioned concepts. In other words, if inherency becomes an issue in a debate, the judge usually adjudicates the issue in terms of the analysis, reasoning, refutation, and rebuttal used by both debate teams.

ANALYSIS

Analysis is simply the arriving at an understanding of the proposition and the discovering of the issues inherent therein. Please note that this definition means that issues are not manufactured; they are there, inherent within the proposition. In judging the merits of the analysis employed by the two teams in a debate, the judge must determine the validity of any arguments related to the affirmative team's understanding of the proposition. With the recent proliferation of the "squirrel" case (one that is either doubtful as to its propositionality or so insignificant that its basic strength lies in its shock and surprise effect),[7] a judge is, too many times, called upon to determine whether or not the affirmative case is propositional. To many debate teams, the solution of the problem of government surveillance of private citizens was elimination of the military draft. To some successful debate teams, the proposition that called for wage and price controls related solely to migrant workers. More recently, a few teams solved the energy crisis by installing fire extinguishers in all homes and commercial buildings.

Time and space do not allow for my usual tirade against the "unusual" interpretations of a debate proposition. However, this issue does present a problem to a judge who uses the argumentation and logic paradigm for judging a debate, and it is in the area of analysis that this judgment must be made. As in all

of the concepts presented here, the judge reflects his own debate philosophy in consideration of the issues. So, even in using the rather stringent argumentation and logic paradigm, personal value judgments are still made.

Some judges consider propositionality such a crucial issue that the affirmative team must win it in order to win the debate. Others consider it just another issue to be weighed against all others at the conclusion of the debate. I, personally subscribe to the former viewpoint. Most judges do require the negative to raise the issue of propositionality in order for it to play a part in the debate decision. A few judges, though the number is increasing, insist that, if the case is, in their opinion, clearly not propositional, they are justified awarding the debate to the negative team, even though the negative does not protest the affirmative interpretation of the proposition. I count myself among those who require the negative to advance and argue the issue successfully in order to win the debate on this issue alone.

Once the affirmative team has interpreted the proposition, they must consider the assumption their position automatically entails. The judge must then determine whether or not the affirmative team makes value assumptions that have basis in fact or are developed logically. The affirmation is also judged on whether or not they make proper analysis of the negative arguments against its case.

Judgments on analysis must also be made with the negative team in mind. They are required to interpret the affirmative case properly and to establish, effectively, the analysis of their own position in the debate. If they do not argue the key issues, they are in a weakened position.

If either team holds a preponderant advantage in this key area of a debate, it would be extremely difficult for an argumentation and logic judge to vote against them.

INVESTIGATION

In the context of argumentation, investigation is the process of accumulating information about a proposition. Just as it is extremely important for a debate team to discover the proper issues of a proposition, it is equally important to find the proper material with which to develop these issues. Though this concept has a counterpart in evidence, it is being considered separately here because a judge is influenced by any personal conclusion that a team has not properly investigated the proposition. Improper investigation is usually revealed in a poorly developed case, a case almost devoid of evidence, or a lack of clash on an argument once it is advanced.

The finding of the proper material will enable a team to sharpen the issues in their argument and to reveal to the judge a thoroughly prepared team. This applies to the negative team as well as the affirmative. Once a judge perceives that a team is not properly prepared for a debate, it is difficult for him to

vote in its favor.

EVIDENCE

Rather than evidence as it pertains to proper investigation, the term will be used in this discussion as it relates to its proper usage in an argument. The quality of evidence will also be considered.

Ehninger and Brockriede define evidence as,". . . an informative statement believed by the listener and employed by an arguer to secure belief in another statement."[8] Whether or not evidence is believed is entirely in the mind of the debate judge. However, the judge must go beyond believability to determine the effect of the evidence used on the argument that it is supposed to support.

The first determination a judge must make concerns the probative effect of the evidence. The evidence card read could be completely accurate in substance and still not contribute to the force of the argument. For instance, a negative debater arguing the exclusive funding of elementary and secondary education by the federal government might use a card that reads, "By using a system of fiscal reorganization, most states could easily finance quality education." He might conclude from this card that all states are capable, under the present system, of financing quality education without federal funding. However, upon proper analysis of the evidence card, one can see that the card did not say that

all states could finance quality education through fiscal reorganization. Such a conclusion would leave the negative team wide open to the attack which many affirmative teams use that stresses the guarantee of funding which is built in to the affirmative case.[9] Such an argument usually has quite an impact on the argumentation and logic judge.

A second determination that must be made by the judge relates the credibility of the evidence. The day has passed when debate teams automatically accept any and all evidence as credible. It is good to hear a debater argue that just because a congressman makes a statement about a subject, the statement in and of itself is not necessarily expert testimony. More and more judges are giving weight to such arguments. This leads to judgments based on the quality of the evidence and this is basic to good argumentation.

Another evidence judgment is made in relation to the use of necessary evidence. Whereas the debaters of the 1940's and early 1950's used evidence too sparsely, the pendulum has now swung to the other extreme. Some debaters now judge their worth by the weight of their file boxes. I have heard entire debate speeches which were merely series of evidence cards, tied together with trite transitions. This writer believes that the following statement contains a belief held by most argumentation and logic judges:

An academic debate should be a contest between two

> debate teams representing their respective institutions. The thinking and analysis involved in a debate should be done by the individual participants. When a debater constructs his speech predominately with evidence cards, he is engaging in more of an oral interpretation contest than a debating event.[10]

There is equal danger in using insufficient evidence. One of the criteria used for choosing an intercollegiate debate topic is that adequate evidence should be available on both sides of the proposition. The first inclination of a judge when he hears a series of unsupported arguments is to form a bias against the team guilty of this strategic error. The single exception to this conclusion is in the case of the affirmative team taking a "squirrel" approach to the proposition.

Evidence is an indispensable element in good debating and the argumentation and logic judge treats it as such. He will use his own personal preference as to the evidence tests he applies but he will test the evidence.

REASONING

Reasoning has been established in this paper as the process by which we infer a conclusion from premises. This writer does not purpose to consider the various modes of reasoning in this discussion. One can find them in any argumentation textbook. However, I do want to emphasize the importance of reasoning in argumentation and the part that it plays in a judge's decision.

Again, an argumentation and logic judge has his own tests which he applies to reasoning used in a debate. In some cases,

he has formulated tests of his own but most of the time he uses the tests expounded in his favorite argumentation textbook. In general, these tests determine whether or not the reasoning is sound. In recent years, the vogue has been to follow Toulmin and insist that a warrant be used in each unit of proof. The warrant is the reasoning step which justifies accepting the inference made from the data. A judge who advocates the use of the warrant is displeased with the debate strategy that calls for the use of a quick series of evidence cards with each followed immediately by an equally quick conclusion. This is poor strategy and poor argumentation.

An argumentation and logic judge is impressed by a debater who discovers a fallacy in an opponent's reasoning. Castell posits that

> A fallacy is an argument containing an unjustified inference. The inference may be unjustified for various reasons. This fact serves as the basis for classifying and naming types of fallacious arguments.[11]

Castell gives perhaps the most comprehensive treatment to fallacies that an argumentation scholar can find in any textbook. However, the various types and classifications of fallacies will not be covered here.

Inconsistencies and contradictions in reasoning also play an important part in a judge's decision. However, the final decision in this area of argumentation is based on the individual judge's personal assessment as to the soundness of the reasoning involved.

REFUTATION

Refutation is considered to be the attempted destruction of the opponent's argumentation. In this area of the debate, the judge is watchful for a debater's exposure of weaknesses in the opposing case. Such weaknesses could be questionable analysis and interpretation, flaws in evidence, fallacies in structure of argument, and inconsistencies and contradictions in argument.

Of added importance is the placement of refutation in a speech. If an opponent has advanced an argument which logically requires an answer before the next speaker gets into his general line of argument, the judge will look for this refutation at the beginning of the speech. Otherwise, refutation should be placed where it would most strengthen the advocate's case.

In general, the argumentation and logic judge will watch not only for the quality and proper placement of refutation but for the use of all needed refutation. In other words, those arguments which are important enough to mandate refutation must be refuted.

REBUTTAL

Rebuttal is the attempted rebuilding of an argument once it has been attacked. It does no good to refute an opponent's argumentation if your own case is in shambles.

There are many techniques that a debater can use to rebuild his own case and a judge is impressed when a debater uses

these techniques effectively. Some of these techniques are: turning the tables, reducing to absurdity, matching the proof or evidence, posing a dilemma, applying residues, forcing the defense, and arguing a fortiori.[12] These tactics will not be elaborated upon here but they do represent tools that a debater can use for rebuilding his case. It suffices to say that an argumentation and logic judge sees effective use of rebuttal as a most important factor in making a decision.

SUMMARY

A judge who uses the argumentation and logic paradigm as his basis for judging a debate views argumentation as an analytical-critical instrument. He uses certain core concepts of argumentation in making his value judgment at the conclusion of the debate and becomes an actual participant in the argumentation as he fills in his ballot. The decision is given to the team which, in the opinion of the judge, made the most effective use of these concepts.

This writer submits that the argumentation and logic paradigm is an excellent one for judging an academic debate. It places the emphasis on the argument rather than on team reputation or smooth flowing delivery. A paradigm which does this has much merit.

FOOTNOTES

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1 George Pierce Baker. The Principles of Argumentation (Boston: Ginn and Company, Publishers, 1895), p. 15.

2 Austin J. Freeley, Argumentation and Debate, 3rd ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1971) p. 2.

3 Alburey Castell, A College Logic (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935), p. 383.

4 Glenn R. Capp and Thelma Robuck Capp, Principles of Argumentation and Debate (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 122.

5 Ibid.

6 Glen E. Mills, Reason in Controversy, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), p. 21.

7 Gerald H. Sanders, Introduction to Contemporary Academic Debate (Minneapolis: Campus Press, 1972), p. 8.

8 Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, Decision by Debate (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1967), p. 100.

9 This example was taken from Gerald H. Sanders, "Misuse of Evidence in Academic Debate," Issues, vol. 5 no. 6, March, 1973, p. 3.

10 Ibid., p. 4.

11 Castell, A College Logic, p. 15.

12 Mills, Reason in Controversy, pp. 272-76.

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